

Cover *W. M. Leake del. G. C.*

T H E
P R O P H E C Y
O F
L I B E R T Y:
A
P O E M.

Humbly Inscrib'd to

The Right Hon. Robert Lord ROMNEY.

Te decet Hymnus, O chara Libertas!

L O N D O N,

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T H E



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ADVERTISEMENT.

The probability of a General Act of Insolvency gave rise to the following work of Fancy — the Author knows it sufficiently deficient in point of elegance, but as it is the first work of the kind he ever attempted, and as he is but a young attendant on the Muses, he hopes the Candid will behold it with a favourable eye.

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THE
P R O P H E C Y
O F
L I B E R T Y.

OH thou, whose breast each gen'rous passion fires,
Which true nobility, alone, inspires,
Who ever steady in the path hast trod,
Prescrib'd by reason, and approv'd by God ;
From that exalted seat where thou art plac'd, 5
More by thy virtues, than thy titles, grac'd ;

B

With

With usual goodness smile upon the muse,
While she her course on fancy's wing pursues;
And if above her sphere she tempts to rove,
Let pity plead, where judgment cant approve. 10

Unus'd to phrase it in the mode of courts,
Where high-birth, swells, and strutting pride, resorts;
Unus'd to city scenes, where wealth o'ergrown,
Teaches the brow, on humbler state, to frown;
To each, alike unus'd, she wings her way, 15
Where silver *Medway's* soft meanders play;
On whose embroider'd banks, unnumber'd sheep,
White as the alpine snow, in gambols leap;
Where soft-tun'd oaten reeds are heard around,
And maids dance featly, to the festive sound; 20
Where all the mead its native sweetness wears,
Save one *sad spot* where gladness ne'er appears.

Here

Here on, uprising to a lofty height,
A mighty structure, strikes the startled sight ;
Structure, erst for the *good* of man, design'd, 25
To aid just law, and keep the vile, confin'd ;
Protect the trav'ler from the ruffian free,
And be the safeguard of society.
Degraded, now, to aid th' *oppressor's* plan,
And make the *hapless*, tho' the *honest* man, 30
Depriv'd of *Liberty*, all ills endure,
For the atrocious crime, of being *poor*.

Oh *Liberty* ! thou dearest meed of heav'n,
Parent of ev'ry joy, to whom 'tis giv'n
To smoothe the rugged brow of anxious care, 35
And make old age the robe of youth to wear,
To cause the face of *poverty* to smile,
Its woes to mitigate, its wants beguile ;

Why have brave *Britons*, *foreign foes* withstood,
 And mark'd their freedom, with their *patriot* blood ;
 While for a grasp of ore, or causeless strife, 41
 A *native foe* can blast their joys for life ;
 And *Gallic slaves*, their scorn, can justly boast,
 In this case, blessings, *Albion's* sons have lost ?

Beneath this roof, where pleasure's gladsome ray, 45
 Ne'er sheds its brightness on the gloomy day,
 When nought but want and wretchedness appears,
 And execrations strike the wounded ears ;
 Where clanking chains, from many a wretch, proclaim
 Them foes to virtuous acts, or honest fame ; 50
 Where one, whose rugged breast ne'er learn'd to feel
 Meek pity, pleading for another's ill ;
 Whom forming, nature's self, was in dispute,
 " Whether to shape a man, or stamp a brute,"

'Ycleap'd

'Ycleap'd a *turnkey*, with despotic sway 55
Swells o'er the hapless, fated to obey;
Thirty poor *Britons* were condemn'd to know,
A ceaseless round of agonizing woe.
Amidst the whole, two seem'd in grief the first,
And deem'd themselves most eminently curs'd. 60

Damon, the one, just come to manhood's pride,
Who woo'd the fair *Lavinia* for a bride,
Woo'd her with each fond proof of am'rous care,
Soft was his manner, open was his air;
His candid soul from all disguise was free, 65
Stranger to *guilt*, and foe to *treachery*.
Yet snatch'd from pleasing prospect's, here he mourn'd -
His fortune blasted, and his passion scorn'd.

Here *Pastor* too, grown to maturer age,
In later life felt tortures bitt'rest rage; 70
In

In him the gentle partner of his care,
 Who bless'd his bed for many a circling year,
 And five poor helpless infants sadly left,
 Lamented every social joy, bereft ;
 Ah hapless babes ! alas, deny'd to prove 75
 "The tender guidance of paternal love."

These two together (for we always find
 That griefs recounted ease the loaded mind)
 Would each to other, when depriv'd of rest,
 Thus vent th' o'erflowings of his tortur'd breast. 80

D A M O N.

How curs'd am I, whom spite and ran'crous hate,
 Doom here to know affliction's utmost weight ?
 Once I was happy ; for the pleasing gale
 Of prosp'rous fortune, swell'd my flowing sail ;

Respect

Respect attended me, contentment shed 85
Her spicy odours o'er my happy bed,
Softened my pillow and my cares beguil'd ;
My *friends* were near, and luscious plenty smil'd ;
Then would *Lavinia* with a gracious eye,
Applaud my song, nor frown upon my sigh : 90
Alas ! she knew not then, my breast was fir'd
With that strong passion which those eyes inspir'd ;
Now, thorny-pillow'd care attends my bed,
And plenty, health and soft content are fled ;
My *friends* alas ! prove only *friends* in name, 95
For ah ! how few, can feel the sacred flame ?
Lavinia scorns my love—tho' condescends
Coldly to rank her *lover* 'midst her *friends* ;
But what is that, to one who loves like me ?
Who here confin'd, no dawn of hope, can see 100
Rising on balmy wing to ease my care,
And banish horror, madness and despair ?

PASTOR.

Why at such ills as these dost thou repine?
Suppose them great—Ah say what then are mine?
What tho' compell'd beneath a villain's hand, 105
To mourn curst bondage in thy native land;
What tho' thy prospect's darken'd for a while,
Thou'rt but a youth, and fate again may smile:
Perhaps she dooms thee to this cursed place,
To prove thee worthy of her future grace; 110
What tho' *Lavinia*, don't thy love attend,
Thou own'st she bids thee hope her still thy friend;
That bliss alone o'er pays such ills as thine,
They are but *half-woes*, when compar'd to mine.
For turn imaginations eye, and see 115
My lov'd *Pastora*—round her matron-knee,
View five soft pledges of our virtuous love,
Who once were us'd my only joys to prove;
Who

Who when returning from my daily toil,
Would pay my labours with each infant smile; 120
Would climb my knee the soft'ring kifs to share,
And take my blessing with their ev'ning prayer,
See these poor fondlings, innocently rude,
To their fond mother cry in vain for food,
While she, a second *Niobe*, appears 125
A speechless statue, answ'ring but with tears.
View this then—and say thou—whose lot is best;
For these are woes indeed, which rive my breast.

D A M O N.

Thou hast enjoy'd thy love, a length of years,
Shar'd all her joys, and lighten'd all her cares; 130
Nor mourn thy children now, thy lost estate,
Condemn'd to suffer in their father's fate,
For thy good parents, all their wants supply,
And guard them with a fondly-watchful eye;

Thy lov'd *Pastora*, too, to me tis known, 135
 Weeps for thy sorrows, more than for her own;
 Here's comfort then for thee while I must taste
 Severer ills—for they thro' life will last.
 Deny'd soft *Hymeneal* sweets to prove,
 Or taste those raptures with the maid I love, 140
 Which youth experiences, when fond desire
 Swells all his bosom, with its mighty fire;
 Deny'd to know a father's joys, or share
 The pleasing labours of parental care;
 Scorn'd, cause curst malice, envious of my bliss, 145
 Dash'd my full bowl of joy with bitterness;
 And rank'd me as the vilest here confin'd:
 These woes, indeed, to thy maturer mind,
 Whose hour of youth is o'er, may not seem great,
 I deem them heaviest, can be dealt by fate. 150

PASTOR.

PASTOR.

Idly we argue, since we fully know,
 Past bliss; recounted, heightens present woe;
 Nor boots it more, revolving in the mind
 Joys, which in future life, we hop'd to find;
 Each of us thinks the woes he feels, surpass 155
 The others, when survey'd thro' wisdom's glass:
 Suppress then each his sighs—nor let us moan
 To walls (or *hearts* more hard, than walls) of stone.

They ended—when from out the dismal room,
 A radiant light, expell'd the hateful gloom; 160
 Enliv'ning music's notes, surpriz'd their ears,
 Notes, soft as those, which glad the tuneful spheres;
 To these, loud trumpets join'd their silver sound,
 Diffusing joys, unknown before, around;

And strait with slow majestic pace, came on 165
A form celestial; on her visage shone
Compassion, candour, dignity and truth,
And o'er her cheeks, bloom'd everliving youth,
Soft ease of heart fate sparkling in her eye,
And spoke the message, which she brought was joy; 170
Her auburn tresses, loosely flow'd behind
Careless, and scarcely by a band confin'd,
Her graceful limbs, an azure vest conceal'd,
Save, where one half, her rising bosom, swell'd;
A snowy *cestus*, girt her slender waist, 175
And o'er the whole, a *Tyrian* robe, was plac'd;
Her right, *Religion* held—her left hand bore
Bright *Virtue*, emblem'd by the dress she wore;
Plenty and *Peace*, and loudly trumping *Fame*,
Obsequious, as her due attendants, came; 180

Next these, a joyous train, with looks serene,
Of frolic mortals, clos'd the pleasing scene;
High o'er them all, the *Goddess* rais'd her crest,
And *Liberty* shone forth by all confess'd!

Cease to lament, my sons, she cry'd, while I 185
The parent of sublimest joys, am nigh.

Tho' in this horrid place, thus long confin'd,
Where every woe, distracts the tortur'd mind.
And tyrant's hands, to aid a villain's cause,
Have stretch'd, beyond their due intent, my laws; 190
Laws, made to succour, polish, and redress,
Not aid oppression and promote distress;
Or spread black ruin o'er the hapless poor,
But guard from man to man his right secure;
Tho' bending 'neath your griefs, ye here have mourn'd,
Your dearest hopes, so fatally o'erturn'd; 196

Take

Take comfort now—discharge your tearful eyes;
 And look around, see, gayer prospects rise!
 As when *Laertes* son, by partial fate,
 Condemned to roam, thro' many a distant state,
 Experienc'd countless woes, yet bravely bore
 Their force, till landing on *Dulichium's* shore;
 Blest then, as much as love and truth could be,
 In the chaste arms of his *Penelope*;
 And reigning, happy, o'er his native plains,
 Confess'd his joys, o'erpay'd his former pains;
 So, shall ye know, from these your suff'rings past,
 With greater relish future joys to taste;
 And freed from hence, to life's last hour enjoy,
 My choicest blessings, which can never cloy,
 Religion, that blest tut'res of mankind
 Who fills with noblest thoughts the worthy mind,
 Shall teach each breast, to feel another's woe,
 And, 'stead of tortures, blessings to bestow;

Shall

Shall spread sweet *Charity's* celestial fire, 215
And make each *Hate*, in gen'ral *Love*, expire ;
Want, shall no more, your scanty boards, disgrace,
Or fright you with her puny, haggard face ;
But *Plenty*, shall extend her wide domain,
And crown with yellow crops, the loaded plain, 220
While calm *Content* on ev'ry brow shall smile
And ev'ry blessing glad my fav'rite isle.

Nor think my sons, that what I prophecy,
Stands at a distance ; for the hour is nigh
That teems, important with the final fate, 225
Of you, and numbers in your hapless state.
That hour, shall sacred *George* ascend the throne,
And, like a father, make your woes his own :
He, *Briton* born, shall feel each *Briton's* grief,
And like a *Briton*, instant send relief ; 230
Then,

Then, his sage *Senate*, at his dread command,
Shall, by one law, spread *Freedom* o'er the land:
At this, fell *Malice* swift away shall fly,
And chain'd in *Hell*, her native region lye.
At this, *Revenge* shall hold her baleful breath, 235
At this, pale *Envy*, gnaw herself to death;
At this, ten thousand joy-fraught thanks shall rise,
Ten thousand pray'rs, entreat the fav'ring skies,
To pour unnumber'd blessings on the heart,
That could to all such boundless blifs impart. 240
But ah! beware, the goddess cry'd, beware,
Nor dare presume on *royal grace* too far;
Should you, thro' folly, e'er again give room
For a black fate, like yours, to spread its gloom
On this my chosen land—ye then in vain, 245
May sigh for joys, ye never will regain.

The Goddeſs ceas'd—and ſtrait the tuneful choir
To dulcet ſounds, ſhook each the quiv'ring lyre ;
On *Damon's* brow fate lively hope enthron'd,
And *Paoſtor's* breaſt her ſoothing ſweetneſs own'd. 250

F I N I S.